DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 460 437 EA 031 351

TITLE	Office for Civil Rights Fiscal Year 2000 Annual Report to Congress. Guaranteeing Equal Access to High-Standards Education.
INSTITUTION	Office for Civil Rights (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	36p.; For the 1999 report, see ED 443 174.
AVAILABLE FROM	Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20202. Tel: 800-421-3481 (Toll Free).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Civil Rights; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; *Equal Opportunities (Jobs); *Equal Protection; Government Publications; Legislation; *Minority Groups; *Racial Integration; Social Discrimination
IDENTIFIERS	*Office for Civil Rights

ABSTRACT

The mission of the Office for Civil Rights is to ensure equal access to a high-quality education for all students through the vigorous enforcement of civil rights. This report outlines the legal responsibilities and goals of the organization and shows how these were met in the year 2000. There are explanations of how the agency provides educational policy guidance, how it resolves formal complaints and provides information that can lead to less formal resolutions of problems, how it prioritizes activities, how it measures its productivity, and how it has formed strategies to meet its goals. High-priority activities included racial harassment and discipline issues of Native American students, higher education desegregation, magnet-school assistance programs, equal opportunity in vocational education, and a postsecondary racial harassment initiative. In addition, an urban initiative addressed civil rights for students in large East Coast cities, a civil-rights survey of all public elementary and secondary schools collected data, and a new and simpler option offered states a way of sending data on students with disabilities in a single data submission. A new strategy has been the promotion of a more collaborative process, forming partnerships with agencies, parents, students, and business leaders. Another new strategy has been the empowerment of parents through information about civil-rights legislation and about ways to address problems effectively, but informally. Emphasis also has been placed on the monitoring of resolution agreements to make sure that change has occurred. Specific examples of how particular students and employees have benefited from OCR help are given throughout the report, which reveal the human dimension of discrimination. An appendix lists addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses of the 12 regional offices. (RKJ)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

EA

ED 460 437

Office for Civil Rights Fiscal Year 2000 Annual Report to Congress

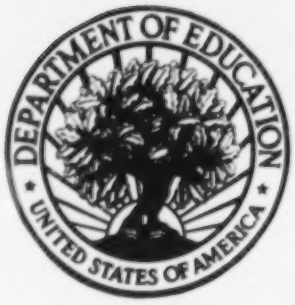
Guaranteeing Equal Access to High-Standards Education

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

EA031351

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



Office for Civil Rights
Fiscal Year 2000
Annual Report to Congress

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights

MISSION:

To ensure equal access to a high quality education for all students through the vigorous enforcement of civil rights.

Contents

Our Goal Is Equal Access To Quality Education	1
The Office for Civil Rights Ensures Equity and Excellence	3
How OCR Does Its Work	4
Some OCR Priority Activities	10
OCR Does More Work, More Efficiently	14
How OCR Measures Its Work	18
OCR Develops Strategies That Work	20
OCR Makes A Difference in the Lives of Students	25
Looking Toward the Future	30
Appendix	
Offices and Addresses	31

Our Goal Is Equal Access To Quality Education

Providing all our children with the high-quality education they will need to succeed is one of the greatest challenges we face. In this new information age, driven by science and technology and an increasingly competitive global economy, the future of our children will depend, in large part, on the quality of education they receive in the classroom.

The statistics all point in the same direction. Almost 90 percent of the new jobs require more than a high school level of literacy and math skills. High-skill jobs are growing at nearly three times the rate of other jobs. Within the next decade, 65 percent of all jobs will require technology skills. The number of jobs requiring at least four years of college will more than double in the near future.

The link between education and earning power is confirmed by a range of economic studies. Fifteen years ago a worker with a college degree made 38 percent more, on average, than a worker with a high school degree. Today, that difference is 73 percent. Over the course of a career, a person with a bachelor's degree will earn, on average, $600,000 more than a person who has a high school diploma. This makes the return on a college investment nearly double the stock market's historical rate of return.

Nations that prepare all of their citizens for the new technology are going to enjoy the highest standards of living. If America is to remain a leader in the world community, all our children must have access to quality education. We cannot afford to permit discrimination against any segment of America's diverse population to interfere with the opportunity to receive a high-quality education.

In facing the challenge, we can draw encouragement from some of the progress we are witnessing. Our world is changing--and so are our schools. In 1980, a computer in a classroom was a novelty. Today, 72 percent of fourth-graders are using computers at least once a week. That's a step forward to prepare students to succeed in the information age.

Today, educators are working hard to include as many students as possible in challenging courses. The good news is that more students are taking the rigorous courses needed to prepare and succeed in the 21st century.

In 1997, more than two-thirds of high school graduates went directly on to college. That's up from fewer than half of all students in 1980. And for the first time in history, a majority of young African Americans are enrolling in higher education immediately after their graduation from high school.

It is critical that we continue to build on these accomplishments. In our efforts to promote both excellence and equity, we need everyone's ideas in identifying and promoting strategies to help close the remaining opportunity gaps.

Our children are the most priceless resource of this great nation. We can seize the enormous opportunities of the new millennium by making it possible for all our children to receive the first-class education they deserve. They and our country will be far the better for it.

The Office for Civil Rights Ensures Equity and Excellence

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education (ED) is responsible for enforcing five federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability and age by recipients of federal financial assistance. These laws are:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (prohibiting discrimination based on race, color and national origin);
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (prohibiting sex discrimination in education programs);
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (prohibiting disability discrimination);
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (prohibiting age discrimination); and
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (prohibiting disability discrimination by public entities, whether or not they receive federal financial assistance).

These civil rights laws represent a national commitment to end discrimination in education programs. Since most educational institutions receive some type of federal financial assistance, these laws apply throughout the nation.

Coverage of these civil rights laws extends to:

- nearly 15,000 school districts;
- more than 4,000 colleges and universities;
- about 5,000 proprietary organizations, such as training schools for truck drivers and cosmetologists; and
- thousands of libraries, museums, vocational rehabilitation agencies and correctional facilities.

Consequently, these civil rights laws protect large numbers of students attending, or applying to attend, our educational institutions. In certain situations, the laws also protect persons who are employed or seeking employment at educational institutions. Overall, these laws protect:

- nearly 53.2 million students attending elementary and secondary schools; and
- nearly 15.4 million students attending colleges and universities.

Enforcing these laws is critical to carrying out the mission of the U.S. Department of Education--ensuring equal access to education and promoting educational excellence throughout the nation.

How OCR Does Its Work

Organizational Structure

Most of OCR's activities are conducted by its 12 enforcement offices throughout the country. These enforcement offices are organized into four divisions (Eastern, Western, Midwestern and Southern) that work to prevent, identify, end, and remedy discrimination against America's students. The headquarters office, located in Washington, D.C., provides overall leadership, policy development and coordination.

OCR Resolves Complaints

> "Please find enclosed a copy of [son's] grade card for the first semester. I just want to share this with you as a storybook ending ...Without your help in what I call the fight of our life, [son] and I would not be where we are today."
>
> January 15, 2000, letter from the parent of a high school student

One important way OCR carries out its responsibilities is by resolving complaints. Persons who believe there has been a violation of the civil rights laws enforced by OCR may file complaints with the appropriate enforcement office (see Appendix A). The person or organization filing the complaint may be a victim of the alleged discrimination or may file on behalf of another person or group. The complaint process provides a forum for resolution of alleged discrimination against individuals protected by the civil rights laws.

OCR's primary objective is to resolve the complainant's allegations of discrimination promptly, fairly and appropriately. In FY 2000, OCR used a variety of techniques to resolve 6,364 complaints, the highest number ever in a single year. These techniques range from facilitating voluntary resolutions between parties to negotiating agreements with recipients for voluntary compliance. If these methods fail, OCR issues violation letters and enters into negotiations to correct those violations. If negotiations fail, as a last resort OCR seeks enforcement through the administrative hearing process or refers cases to the Department of Justice. This flexible approach allows OCR to:

- provide timely and effective intervention at the beginning of the complaint process;
- focus on achieving positive change; and
- make students, parents and school officials central to the resolution of complaints.

OCR Conducts Compliance Reviews and Other Proactive Initiatives

In addition to resolving complaints that arrive from the public, OCR initiates "compliance reviews" and other proactive initiatives to focus on specific compliance problems that are particularly acute or national in scope.

Targeted compliance reviews and proactive initiatives maximize the impact of OCR's resources and round out the enforcement program. Experience indicates that these strategic activities benefit large numbers of students through policy or program changes by recipients that are designed to secure equal educational opportunity.

OCR initiated 47 compliance reviews in FY 2000 and brought 71 reviews to successful resolution, some of which had been started in previous years. Compliance reviews are selected based on various sources of information, including survey data as well as information provided by parents, education groups, media, community organizations and the public. In FY 2000, OCR conducted compliance reviews on the following issues:

- ensuring that nondiscriminatory practices are followed in the placement of minority students in special education and the provision of access to gifted and talented programs;
- ensuring that English language learners are afforded access to special language services in order to benefit from a school district's educational program;
- ensuring that students are not subject to a racially hostile environment;
- ensuring nondiscriminatory student disciplinary policies and practices; and
- ensuring equal opportunity for male and female students to participate in athletic programs.

OCR Provides Technical Assistance

Putting an end to discrimination includes preventing it before it starts. It is for this reason that OCR provides information and other support services--known as technical assistance--to schools and colleges, as well as to community, student and parent groups. The aid that OCR gives to educational institutions helps them comply with federal civil rights requirements, while the assistance given to students and others informs them of their rights under those civil rights laws.

OCR offices provide technical assistance through a variety of methods that include on-site consultations, conferences, training, community meetings, and published materials.

> "[OCR's] workshop received outstanding evaluations. I also received several phone calls from conference participants praising the value of information [OCR staff] conveyed."
>
> May 25, 2000, letter from a State Office of Education

OCR coordinated and/or participated in a number of conferences during FY 2000. In collaboration with the Department of Education's Mid-Atlantic and Southeast Equity Assistance Centers and the Intercultural Development Research Association's South Central Collaborative for Equity, OCR co-sponsored

the conference "Equal Access to a Quality Education: The Civil Right of the 21st Century." The approximately 500 conference participants included representatives of state and local agencies, advocacy groups, beneficiary organizations and professional associations. Participants explored civil rights challenges facing schools in the 21st century.

The conference also provided a forum for information sharing about emerging education and civil rights issues (some of which are unique to the 17 southern and border states) and options for addressing those issues. Experts from a number of fields presented papers and conducted seminars on a variety of topics, including high-stakes testing; harassment, violence and hate crimes; education programs and instruction strategies (e.g., special education, ability grouping and tracking, and alternative language programs for English language learners); access to challenging curricula; courses, qualified teachers and technology; resource comparability; and parental and community involvement.

> "The 35 current and prospective college students in attendance are all going to be able to make use of the information you presented … Since education is the key to their future success, understanding the college environment and experience is essential to students who are blind or visually impaired."
>
> August 15, 2000, letter from a State Department of Social Services

OCR also worked in cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences and with the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, and other Department of Education offices to present the "Millennium Conference: Achieving High Standards for All" at the National Science Foundation. The conference focused on issues regarding the achievement of minority and disadvantaged students, including learning research, teaching methods, reform efforts in high-poverty urban schools and effective technical assistance. The conference, attended by more than 325 state and local educators and policymakers from around the country, provided information on strategies that work to raise achievement for all students, while closing achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students.

OCR also participated in a conference sponsored by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics, which was attended by more than 1,000 athletic directors and administrators. During the course of the conference, OCR staff conducted roundtable discussions that focused on standards for providing nondiscriminatory participation opportunities to male and female students and on the award of athletic scholarships. In addition to providing specific information about Title IX compliance, the conference provided a forum for OCR to meet informally with athletic officials to discuss areas of mutual concern.

During FY 2000, OCR conducted an assessment of its ability to communicate with limited English proficient (LEP) persons. OCR met with a number of groups serving LEP populations and explored ways to provide information in a variety of formats, including written translations, oral translations and outreach to LEP communities. A result of this assessment was the development of a translated fact sheet on the basic rights of students and ways that parents and

schools can work together. The pamphlet, entitled "Families and Schools as Partners," also is available in Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Navajo.

In addition to these proactive initiatives, OCR responds to inquiries and requests from the public. Calls and letters requesting assistance come from other federal agencies, state agencies, local school districts, community groups, parents and students. OCR customer service teams often serve as the first contact point for students, parents, educators and community members who need a question answered, who want a copy of one of the OCR publications, or who have a Freedom of Information Act request.

> "I was extremely impressed by your willingness to pursue this matter with such short notice…Parents like me are also very lucky to have such a knowledgeable individual available to address our concerns regarding the violation of our children's civil rights."
>
> June 2, 2000, e-mail message from a parent acknowledging OCR's technical assistance

OCR Provides Policy Guidance

OCR must communicate clearly how the civil rights laws apply in particular situations so that people protected by the laws understand their rights and education institutions understand their obligations and are able to avoid legal problems. Also, compliance standards allow OCR staff to make determinations that are legally supportable and based on a fair and thorough analysis of information. In FY 2000, OCR issued policy, investigative guidance and resource materials on a number of high-priority issues.

> "[OCR investigator and attorney] were like angels from heaven…I have been treated consistently with the utmost respect, professionalism and kindness. They have always explained their overall plan and kept me alerted at each step. Their help restored my faith in mankind and I feel safer knowing someone is 'out there' working to protect me."
>
> January 12, 2000, letter from complainant after reaching a settlement in an employment termination case

Testing

OCR undertook extensive work in developing a testing resource guide. The purpose of the guide is to provide a practical resource for educators and policymakers to ensure that tests used for high-stakes decisions are developed and implemented in ways that are educationally sound and legally appropriate, and thereby promote the complementary goals of excellence and equity in education.

> "I would like to tell you how much I enjoyed your recent talk … It brought a lot of clarity to the very tough issues facing any large public organization providing services to a variety of customers."
>
> May 2, 2000, letter from a State Legislative Council

The guide is being developed in close consultation with the education and testing community. Plans were also made to include several rounds of comments and meetings with educators, parents, teachers, business leaders, policymakers, test publishers, civil rights groups, researchers and individual Members of Congress.

English Language Learners

OCR issued a guide for school districts to use in developing and evaluating their programs for English language learners. The materials are intended as a resource for school district use, rather than as a statement of legal requirements.

Charter Schools

OCR's guidance entitled "Applying Federal Civil Rights Laws to Public Charter Schools: Questions and Answers" represented part of a joint effort by the Department of Education and Department of Justice to support innovation and choice within public school systems. It provides information on how public charter schools may be developed and operated consistent with the civil rights laws. The document addresses recruitment, admissions and lotteries, issues related to desegregation, and services for students who are limited English proficient and students who have disabilities.

Disability Harassment

OCR and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the Department of Education marked the 10th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act by jointly issuing a Dear Colleague letter on disability harassment. The letter reminds schools, colleges and universities that prompt action must be taken if harassment of a student based on disability interferes with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's program. The letter describes what actions may constitute disability harassment under existing law and outlines measures that schools can take to prevent disability harassment or to respond effectively if it occurs.

Intradistrict Resource Comparability

OCR worked on preparing guidance to help staff ensure that all students in a school district have equal access to educational resources as required by Title VI. The guidance responds to the increase in lawsuits and OCR complaints alleging inequities in the quality and quantity of educational opportunities based on race, ethnicity and economic status. In evaluating resource comparability, OCR will consider four major components--staff (teachers, administrators and support staff); programs (academic programs and extracurricular activities); instructional support (textbooks, supplies, technology and libraries); and facilities (physical plant and school safety).

Disability--Mitigating Measures

Investigative guidance was issued to staff on how to apply recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions in determining whether an individual has a disability within the education context. In the decisions (*Sutton v. United Airlines, Inc., Murphy v. United Parcel Service, Inc.*, and *Albertsons, Inc. v. Kirkingburg),* the Supreme Court held that the determination of whether an individual has a disability must take into account the effects of any "mitigating measures" (such as eyeglasses or medication) used by that individual. The guidance discusses how to take mitigating measures into account and clarifies the distinction between a mitigating measure and an auxiliary aid, related aid or service, or modification provided for a student with a disability. The guidance was developed in consultation with the Department of Justice and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987

OCR worked with the Department's Office of the General Counsel to amend the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 and the Age Discrimination Act to conform with the 1987 Civil Rights Restoration Act's definition of "program or activity." The regulatory amendments will clarify that OCR's jurisdiction over recipients of federal funds is institution-wide, not program specific.

Sexual Harassment

A revision to OCR's 1997 "Sexual Harassment Guidance" was drafted, outlining the responsibilities of federally assisted education institutions under Title IX to take appropriate action if students are sexually harassed by school employees, other students or third parties. The revised guidance will affirm OCR's 1997 guidance on sexual harassment but will clarify its foundation and reasoning in light of two recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions that establish standards governing liability of schools for monetary damages in private lawsuits (*Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District* and *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education*). The revised guidance will apply to OCR's administrative requirements, which are not the same as those that apply to private litigation for money damages.

How to Contact Us

OCR offices have customer service teams that respond to questions about students' rights and schools' responsibilities. See Appendix A for telephone numbers, fax numbers, TDD numbers and e-mail addresses for each of OCR's offices. OCR also serves the public through its Web page at http://www.ed.gov/ocr and its toll-free telephone line [1-800-421-3481] that is staffed during business hours, Eastern time.

Some OCR Priority Activities

Higher Education Desegregation

During FY 2000, OCR resolved the compliance status of three states that previously operated racially segregated higher education systems. Central to the process was applying the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *United States v. Fordice*. In this case, the Supreme Court set out standards for determining whether states have met their obligations to dismantle all remnants of their prior segregated systems under the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and Title VI.

The result of OCR's partnership with Kentucky is an agreement that provides for the continued enhancement of the state's historically black institution (Kentucky State University), improvement of the campus climate at the historically white institutions, and the recruitment and retention of African American students throughout the state. Also, all universities in the Commonwealth are to improve programs to help disadvantaged middle school students prepare for college.

The agreement reached with Texas strengthens Prairie View A&M and Texas Southern, the state's historically black institutions. For example, 10 new academic programs will be added at Texas Southern and eight at Prairie View. These include doctoral programs in Electrical Engineering, Juvenile Forensic Psychology, Educational Leadership, Urban Planning and Environmental Policy, Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Administration of Justice.

The partnership agreement with Maryland, formally signed after FY 2000 ended, also calls for the continued enhancement of its four traditionally black institutions and measures to encourage enrollment, retention and graduation of African American students at the traditionally white institutions. A cornerstone of the agreement is the avoidance of unnecessary program duplication, a particular challenge because of the close proximity of Maryland's traditionally black and traditionally white institutions.

As a result of successful development of these agreements, only one of the original 19 cases involving states that previously operated racially segregated higher education systems remains unresolved. OCR's negotiations with Virginia continue in FY 2001, the last of OCR's open higher education desegregation cases.

Northern Tier Initiative

This initiative focuses on racial harassment and discipline issues affecting American Indian students in the northern tier of the midwestern states. OCR undertook this effort because a variety of sources reported that there was a racially hostile environment for American Indian students residing near reservation border towns. OCR initiated compliance reviews in two

Minnesota school districts that resulted in commitments from both districts to ensure that American Indian students are not treated differently from other students in disciplinary actions and are not subjected to harassment by their peers or district staff. Both districts also agreed to work in partnership with their local Tribal Councils during the implementation of the agreements. OCR has been advised that American Indian children in the two districts feel there have been improvements since the districts began implementing their agreements.

Magnet Schools Assistance Program

The Magnet Schools Assistance program (MSAP), administered by the Department's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, provides assistance to school districts that are seeking to improve educational programs and to reduce, prevent or eliminate minority group isolation. The three-year grant program provides funds for the enhancement or establishment of magnet schools. The assistant secretary for civil rights is required to certify the civil rights eligibility of applicants for MSAP funds and annually review school district grantees' progress in meeting their desegregation goals. During FY 2000, OCR reviewed the annual reports of 54 grantees, provided technical assistance, and certified new three-year awards for four school districts.

Postsecondary Racial Harassment Initiative

This multi-year initiative is an effort to address racial harassment and campus climate that may create barriers to high-quality education at postsecondary education institutions in the northeast United States. About 28 percent of the nation's colleges and universities are located in the northeast. Over the past several years, OCR has noticed an increase in the number of racial harassment complaints. Data also link racial incidents to campuses where social, cultural and academic environments are, or are perceived as, hostile to minority students. The initiative uses a number of strategies, including compliance reviews and technical assistance, to educate schools and students and to focus attention on this critical access issue.

Equal Opportunity in Vocational Education

Under OCR's *Vocational Education Programs Guidelines,* state vocational education agencies are responsible for conducting certain civil rights compliance activities with their sub-recipient schools and programs and reporting to OCR about these activities. State vocational education agency reports of civil rights reviews and other compliance activities are submitted biennially to OCR. OCR's analysis of 33 required reports indicated that state agencies conducted over 200 on-site civil rights compliance reviews of sub-recipient vocational education schools and programs during the 1999-2000 school year. Most of the state reviews resulted in recommendations for improving student access to vocational programs on the basis of race, national origin, sex and disability. OCR responded to the state agency reports by providing constructive suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of the agencies' compliance activities.

In spring 2000, OCR presented four capacity-building workshops for state agency civil rights staff (one workshop in each of OCR's four divisions). These workshops provided training in general compliance review techniques and discussions of compliance issues such as Section 504/ADA accessibility for students with disabilities, services for English language learners, and improving student participation in programs that are non-traditional based on sex. In addition, the workshops fostered networking and collaboration among staff of the participating state agencies. Participants later reported that the workshops provided valuable information and contacts to help enhance the effectiveness of their civil rights compliance programs.

Urban Initiative

The characteristics typical of urban school systems--high incidence of poverty, crime, drugs and violence, inadequate financial resources, and poor academic performance--continue to impose significant barriers to equal access to high-quality education programs. In 1998, because of the high concentration of minority students in large East Coast cities, OCR began a multi-year urban education initiative to address issues of equal access in that setting. In FY 2000, OCR achieved resolution of a particularly complex urban case. The school district comprised 95 percent minority students and was burdened by constantly changing leadership (eight school superintendents in 10 years). The highlights of OCR's resolution agreement included implementation of a uniform curriculum throughout the district so that all students, including English language learners and those with disabilities, would have access to the same educational opportunities. The agreement also included the provision of professional development for teachers and staff to address racial climate issues.

Civil Rights Survey of All Public Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Compliance Report (E&S Survey) is a collection of education- and civil rights-related data about the nation's public elementary and secondary schools. Conducted approximately every two years since 1968, most years the E&S Survey sampled one-third of the nation's approximately 15,000 school districts. In 2000, for the first time since 1976, OCR collected the data from all of the nation's school districts. The results of the 2000 Survey will provide a more accurate and comprehensive set of data for use by OCR in case resolutions and by educators, researchers and policymakers, and will permit cross-references and overlays with the 2000 Census data.

OCR streamlined the 2000 E&S Survey process to provide better support to school districts collecting these data and faster access for data users and customers. OCR believes that, for the first time, the majority of school districts were able to respond to the E&S Survey in electronic, instead of paper, form. Electronic data submission will result in more efficient, accurate data collection. During FY 2000, OCR also supplemented its telephone help-desk service with a Web site to provide direct online advice and assistance to school district staff completing the 2000 E&S Survey. Through these and other improvements, OCR is reducing the burden of data collection and delivering better, faster data.

Collaborative Data Collection

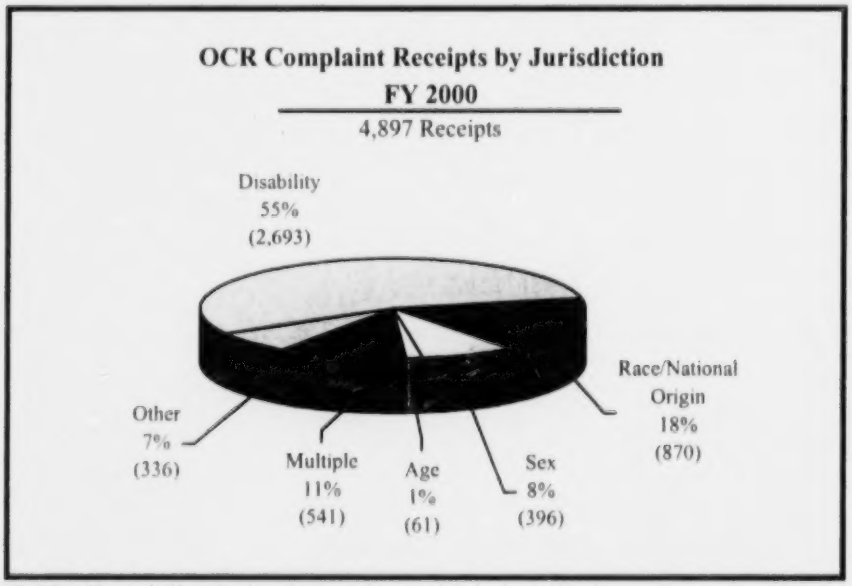
During FY 2000, OCR and other Department of Education offices successfully piloted a new data collection method giving states the option to respond to most of the Department's data needs regarding elementary and secondary students with disabilities in a single, unified data submission. For several years, OCR has been working with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the Council of Chief State School Officers to develop this new, optional data collection, which will reduce data burdens for individual schools and school districts in those states choosing to participate. Beginning fall 2001, states will have the option of providing their data on students with disabilities to the Department in a single data submission.

OCR Does More Work, More Efficiently

FY 2000 Complaint Workload

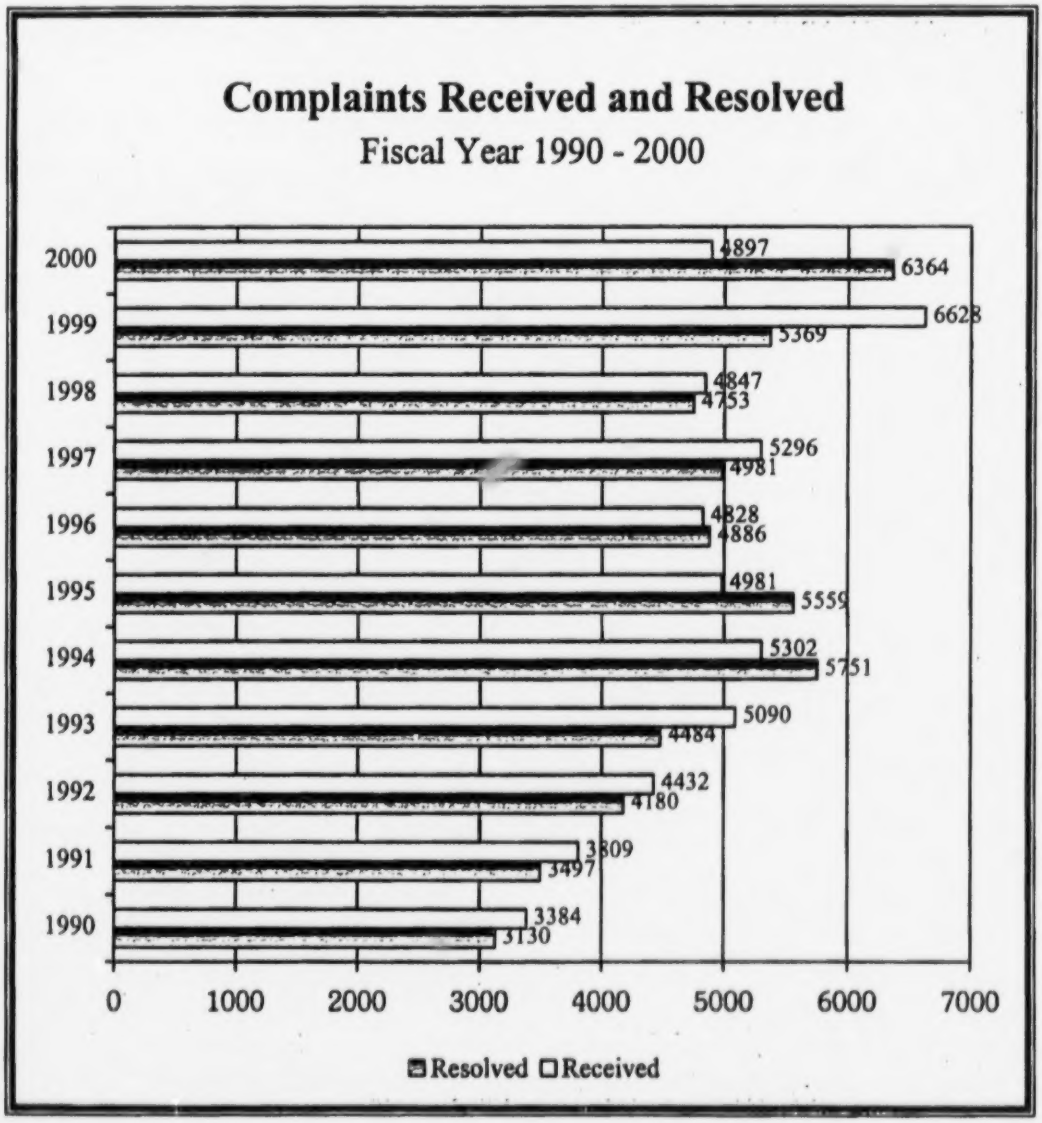
During FY 2000, OCR received 4,897 and resolved 6,364 discrimination complaints, some of which had been received in previous years, involving a wide range of civil rights concerns affecting students' access to equal educational opportunities. The number of complaints that were resolved in FY 2000 exceeded those of any previous year. Of the 4,897 complaints that OCR received in FY 2000, 68 percent were filed against elementary and secondary education institutions, 25 percent were filed against postsecondary education institutions, and 7 percent were filed against vocational rehabilitation and other types of institutions.

As in previous years, the majority (55 percent) of the FY 2000 complaints received alleged discrimination on the basis of disability. These complaints raised issues of access, referral, evaluation and placement of students with disabilities, as well as the treatment and services provided to them. Race and national origin complaints accounted for 18 percent of the total and covered such issues as access to quality education, ability grouping, racial harassment, school discipline, assignment practices and services to English language learners. Complaints alleging sex discrimination comprised 8 percent of all complaint receipts and included issues such as access to interscholastic and intercollegiate athletics and sexual harassment. Age discrimination accounted for 1 percent of complaint receipts. Eleven percent of complaints received by OCR alleged discrimination under multiple jurisdictions. For example, an allegation of inappropriate assignment of minority students to special education involves both race/national origin and disability issues. In addition to complaints that contained allegations of discrimination under OCR's jurisdiction, we received and transferred many complaints that were outside of our statutory responsibility.



OCR Maximizes Resources and Delivers Increased Customer Service

OCR's staff is its most important resource. OCR's work is labor intensive and its ability to ensure that ***all*** students have equal access to a high-quality education depends on maintaining a competent, well-trained, technologically proficient workforce. About 80 percent of OCR's annual budget is for staffing. In FY 2000, OCR's congressional appropriation was $71,200,000, and OCR used the equivalent of 712 full-time staff to resolve 6,364 complaints.



More than 90 percent of OCR's staff are engaged in compliance and enforcement activities, including responding to complaints, conducting compliance reviews and other proactive initiatives, monitoring resolution agreements, developing policy guidance, providing technical assistance, responding to customer inquiries, and other activities to ensure that civil rights considerations are included in all Department of Education programs. Because OCR dedicates over 90 percent of its workforce directly to program activities and uses a flexible complaint resolution process that empowers small teams of attorneys and investigators to independently resolve most complaints, OCR has been able to manage an increasingly large and complex workload while providing improved customer service.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights
Appropriations, FTE & Workload Data
FY 1990 – FY 2000

FY	Presidential Request	Congressional Appropriation	FTE	Complaints		Compliance Reviews	
			Usage	Filed	Resolved	Initiated	Resolved
2000	$73,262,000	$71,200,000	712	4,897	6,364	47	71
1999	$68,000,000	$66,000,000	727	6,628*	5,369	76	93
1998	$61,500,000	$61,500,000	685	4,847	4,753	102	100
1997	$60,000,000	$54,900,000	681	5,296	4,981	152	140
1996	$62,784,000	$55,277,000	744	4,828	4,886	146	173
1995	$61,457,000	$58,236,000	788	4,981	5,559	96	178
1994	$56,570,000	$56,570,000	821	5,302	5,751	144	90
1993	$61,400,000	$56,402,000	854	5,090	4,484	101	82
1992	$56,000,000	$53,625,000	848	4,432	4,180	7	50
1991	$49,900,000	$48,404,000	797	3,809	3,497	41	22
1990	$45,178,000	$44,572,000	815	3,384	3,130	32	30

* 1,614 filed by an individual complainant.

OCR also uses its resources to assist customers (e.g., parents, students, schools and colleges) in preventing civil rights problems and addressing civil rights concerns at the local level. By providing guidance and resource information to the public, OCR believes that students, parents, schools and colleges will better understand civil rights requirements and have the tools to address these issues locally.

In FY 2000, OCR made advances in the use of technology to deliver timely, accessible and accurate information to our customers. OCR improved and expanded its agency-wide Intranet site, providing OCR employees increased access to information necessary to work effectively. OCR is also in the process of developing a new case management system (CMS) that will include both case-related data and documents. OCR anticipates that the CMS also will provide direct access

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

to Departmental data that is used to ensure civil rights compliance. OCR's user-friendly Internet site (http://www.ed.gov/ocr) features many resources to inform parents and students of their rights, including an easy-to-understand description of the complaint resolution process. In addition, the site offers straightforward guidance for educational institutions on complying with civil rights laws, as well as guidance and checklists to make it easier for school districts to prepare and submit data for the fall 2000 Elementary and Secondary Civil Rights Compliance Report. In the near future, an online complaint form will be available to anyone who wishes to file a complaint electronically.

How OCR Measures Its Work

To ensure the efficient use of resources, OCR tracks the following four Government Performance and Results Act measures that indicate whether or not OCR has been timely and effective in removing barriers to equal educational opportunity:

1. **The number of school districts and institutions of higher education that change their policies, procedures or practices to comply with federal civil rights laws as a result of OCR's intervention.**

   In FY 1998, OCR's baseline year for collecting this data, more than 1,300 recipients of federal financial assistance made such changes. In FY 1999, the number was over 1,500, and by FY 2000, the number grew to 2,000--a 53-percent increase over the baseline year.

2. **The estimated number of students positively affected by OCR's activities** (i.e., complaints, compliance reviews, technical assistance and partnerships).

   In FY 1998, OCR's baseline year for collecting this data, the number of students positively affected was approximately 5,900,000. In FY 1999, the number was over 6,500,000, and by FY 2000, the number grew to over 7,600,000--a 29-percent increase over the baseline year. The student numbers are estimated from the results of Measure 1, i.e., those students positively affected by specific changes made to policies/procedures/practices resulting from OCR activities.

3. **Partnerships with parents that lead to civil rights compliance.**

   A parental partnership is established when OCR, as a result of case resolution or another activity, facilitates a collaboration between parents and schools to achieve ongoing civil rights compliance without OCR's continued involvement. In FY 1999, OCR's baseline year for collecting this data, 18 partnerships with parents were formed that resulted in increased access to educational opportunity for students. In FY 2000, the number rose to 38--a 111-percent increase over the baseline year.

4. **The efficient resolution of civil rights complaints** (i.e., 80 percent of OCR's complaints are resolved in 180 days).

   OCR is committed to providing timely relief to students who are denied equal access to educational opportunity. OCR's success in prompt complaint resolution stems from a flexible resolution process that enables individual target dates to be set for each case. After decades of experience, OCR can predict that 20 percent of complaint receipts will be so complex that they cannot be resolved in 180 days. Therefore, OCR has committed to resolving at least 80 percent of its complaints in 180 days. In FY 1999, OCR met its target

goal of 80 percent, while in FY 2000, actual performance was 78 percent. This is not indicative of an upward trend in case processing time, but reflects the fact that in FY 2000 OCR resolved many cases that were over 180 days old. The resolution of a large number of these cases significantly decreased OCR's inventory of unresolved older cases, while slightly decreasing the percentage of OCR's cases that were resolved in 180 days.

OCR Develops Strategies That Work

> "Thanks so much for your help. The parents really enjoyed hearing you."
>
> February 24, 2000, note from a state parent center

OCR pursued a balanced enforcement agenda in FY 2000, focusing on collaboration with state and local education authorities, emphasizing prevention of discrimination, and seeking partners in expanding access to quality education. By working collaboratively, we save taxpayer dollars while remaining focused on protecting the rights of students and ensuring their access to high standards and educational excellence.

Promoting a More Collaborative Process

OCR's Case Resolution Manual places primary emphasis on achieving effective change with the objective of resolving a complainant's allegations of discrimination promptly and appropriately. It emphasizes negotiation and other expedited resolution approaches for resolving complaints. Using this approach, OCR has been highly effective in obtaining voluntary resolution agreements to address civil rights concerns without having to forward findings for litigation. In addition, OCR can resolve more complaints with fewer staff, which allows OCR to use more of its resources on targeted proactive activities, such as compliance reviews, monitoring and technical assistance. Activities are chosen that will achieve access to high-quality and high-standards education for the greatest number of students possible.

> "We're very pleased with the progress that our students have made in the program, and very pleased with the outcome of our collaboration with the Office for Civil Rights. We believe that the audit process that we entered into with your office has affected very positive change in the program."
>
> August 4, 2000, letter from school district's director of student support services

OCR places great reliance on collaborating with stakeholders to achieve optimal results. For example, OCR has been working collaboratively with a state education agency over the past year to ensure that all students with outstanding abilities have an equal opportunity to access gifted and talented programs offered by school districts in the state. During the course of several investigations, OCR found that screening and identification procedures used by several districts relied on a single criterion for placement of students in gifted and talented programs, which had the effect of reducing the number of minority students admitted to such programs. While the state issued comprehensive guidelines in 1997 to assist school systems in developing procedures that facilitate identification of education needs and appropriate services and provide for equal access for all students, OCR found that many school districts were misinterpreting the provisions of the state guidelines. Working together, OCR and the state identified several strategies to address OCR concerns. During the year, the state invited OCR to participate in its statewide conference for coordinators of gifted and talented programs to provide

school districts with information on how to assess their policies and procedures to ensure that all students have equal access to gifted programs. The state issued a memorandum to all school districts clarifying the provisions of the guidelines to ensure that an appropriate, broad-based pool of students is considered for placement in gifted programs.

Partnerships

OCR recognizes that federal, state and local education agencies, parents, students, business leaders and other interested parties share a common goal of equal opportunity and access to high-quality education for all students. OCR uses its experience in educational partnerships with these groups to prevent civil rights problems.

Partnerships also are proving helpful in arriving at effective alternatives to complaints, including educationally sound remedies that increase opportunities for all students. For example, OCR entered into a partnership with a local education agency that included five special education local areas and 19 elementary and secondary education school districts that provide educational services to approximately 250,000 students. During FY 2000, the partnership conducted two workshops on disability issues. Approximately 200 district administrators, school board members, principals, special education directors, Section 504 coordinators, and both special and general education teachers attended the workshops. The goal of the partnership is to improve Section 504 compliance and, as a result, to lower the number of disability complaints received by OCR.

OCR worked with another school district as it sought to strengthen its relationship with parents of English language learners. The district sponsored informal, family-friendly activities in the community to give newcomer parents the opportunity to acquaint themselves with teachers and school staff. Three new parent action committees were formed for Polish bilingual, Russian bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. These committees work with district staff on such issues as improving effective communication with parents of English language learners, staff recruitment, and evaluation of the programs for English language learners. The cooperation between the district and the parent action committees ensures that all stakeholders will have a voice as the district restructures its English language acquisition programs.

Empowering Parents

One of OCR's strategic goals is to empower students and parents to resolve problems of securing equal access to quality education. For example, an OCR enforcement office received a call from a parent whose son was a senior high school football player with diabetes. The student had missed a practice because of an insulin reaction, and the school district invoked a policy requiring a player to sit out the first quarter because of a missed practice. The team was scheduled to play in the state football playoff game on the evening of the day that the parent called OCR. OCR staff helped the parent download information from OCR's Web site and, while not making a finding on the specific issue, OCR explained the requirements of Section 504 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and advised the parent on how to present the

information to school authorities and discuss the impact of the policy on a student with a disability. Later that day the parent successfully resolved the issue with the school district.

OCR has also encouraged parental involvement in agreements resulting from complaints and compliance reviews. Parental involvement is essential to achieving lasting change by ensuring that positive actions implemented by education institutions continue once OCR is no longer involved.

Monitoring

OCR continues to place increased focus on the monitoring of resolution agreements. This is one of the critical processes to maximize the effectiveness of OCR's resolutions. OCR's most well-crafted resolution agreements will do little good unless OCR monitors their implementation to ensure that change has occurred and that students, in fact, are receiving education benefits. Also, monitoring activities are helping to evaluate not only whether agreements are carried out but also whether barriers to quality education are eliminated and positive impact achieved.

During FY 2000, OCR monitored 2,049 complaint resolution agreements The following examples show major benefits to an individual as well as to an entire class of students when schools and colleges carried out their commitments:

- A student who is mobility impaired was unable to attend his computer class because he had to walk down a flight of steps. There were times when he also missed other classes because the elevator at the high school was not always working. A computer lab was moved to the first floor and the elevator was eventually repaired. The school now uses a stair-climbing device when the elevator is temporarily out of service.

- A school district ended its practice of referring only African American students to the police following in-school incidents. The district now has policies and procedures where all similarly situated students are treated the same.

- A midwestern university that had not provided equitable participation opportunities to female students added two new intercollegiate athletic teams for women and expanded several existing women's teams. This resulted in more than 100 new participation opportunities for women, without eliminating any men's teams. The university also constructed a new ice arena that is now used by both the men's and women's ice hockey teams. The new women's ice hockey team became a charter member of a newly formed NCAA Division I women's ice hockey conference, which began competition during the 1999-2000 school year.

- After implementing new policies to ensure nondiscriminatory disciplinary action and follow-up staff training, a school district lowered the suspension rate of its minority students. The suspension rate of African American males dropped from 42.8 percent to 21.4 percent, and the suspension rate of Hispanic males dropped from 32.5 percent to

15.2 percent. This occurred while the district ensured that school safety and discipline were maintained.

- The number of African American students classified as learning disabled decreased substantially after a district started using pre-referral intervention strategies to assist students who were experiencing difficulties in the regular classroom. Also, the district revised its referral procedures for special education evaluation to ensure consideration of the effects of education and medical history, and of environmental, cultural and economic factors. For students who needed special education services, the district increased access to the regular education setting. Today, 80 percent of students with disabilities are educated in the regular classroom with supplementary aids and services.

- Students with disabilities who are unable to carry a full-time course load are no longer automatically ineligible for a state college tuition grant. The state established standards for granting exceptions to the 12-hour course requirement for grant eligibility.

- More than 1,000 girls now have a fair share of "prime time" night basketball games. This came about after the 37 schools in the interscholastic athletics conference submitted new schedules for the girls junior and varsity basketball teams for the 1999-2000 year.

- A doctoral candidate with a visual impairment was denied necessary educational auxiliary aids over several years but managed to graduate by incurring these costs herself. The university has now reimbursed the student more than $10,000.

- A midwestern university fulfilled its agreement to ensure that African American students are treated no differently than other students in instances of alleged sexual misconduct. This included the university's review of disciplinary cases involving sexual assault and remedying inconsistent treatment. The university developed procedures for campus crime alerts to ensure they are applied fairly and provided diversity training to campus police officers.

- A western school district faced a challenge of providing services to almost 1,500 English language learners, many of whom were recently arrived immigrants, representing 33 distinct language groups. The district developed new programs to meet the education needs of these students. The district also developed a process for evaluating whether its programs for English language learners are successful at teaching students English and providing meaningful participation in the district's education program. School officials believe that the district's partnership with OCR was responsible for the significant improvements in addressing the education needs of its English language learners.

Issue Networks

OCR has established internal networks around specific civil rights compliance issues to provide a forum for building and sharing knowledge and expertise around each issue. The current networks are: access to gifted and talented programs and ability grouping; racial and sexual harassment; minorities and special education; services to English language learners; disability; testing and assessment; elementary and secondary school desegregation; and athletics.

The issue networks facilitate communication among OCR staff working on the same issues and encountering the same questions across the country. They also serve to refine OCR's case resolution tools and approaches, ensure consistency in applying legal standards and to promote knowledge-sharing throughout the agency.

These networks assist in our efforts to increase students' access to quality education. For example, OCR's disability network, in conjunction with the National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA), the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), sponsored a three-day national conference on students with psychological disabilities in higher education. Approximately 200 individuals representing 120 colleges and universities attended the conference.

Members of the minorities and special education network made a presentation on effective strategies for reducing disproportionate representation of minorities in special education to approximately 30 administrators and special education personnel from large urban school districts, including Chicago, New York City, Houston, Miami-Dade County, Los Angeles and Philadelphia.

OCR Makes A Difference in the Lives of Students

Statistical information throughout this report furnishes important indicators of the effectiveness and efficiency of OCR's compliance program. However, it is also important to understand the profound influence the program is having on the lives of people, at all educational levels, across the country. Below are examples of how OCR is making a difference in individual lives.

> "You did an excellent job in helping me and I appreciate all that you have done. Thank you!"
>
> May 15, 2000, e-mail message from a student who received doctorate degree from a midwestern university

Addressing Disability Discrimination

Categorical Exclusion of Disabled Students

Students with disabilities must have equal opportunity to participate in academic and extracurricular activities. OCR resolved several cases where students were denied opportunities solely based on their disabilities.

A parent of a student in a high school choir who uses a walker and wheelchair was told that the student could not go on an out-of-state trip with other choir members unless the student's parent accompanied him. Through OCR's Resolution Between the Parties process, the district and parent reached an agreement that allowed the student to participate in the field trip without the parent attending by assigning a staff member to assist the student where necessary.

> "I wanted to thank you for all of the help you have provided for [my son's] placement ... So often we only make demands on people, but we don't let them know how much they are appreciated when they use their abilities to help others overcome what seems to be an intolerable situation. I just wanted to thank you for doing that for us."
>
> November 9, 1999, letter from the parent of an elementary school student

A policy of another school district kept a student off the honor roll because he was enrolled in a special education math class. OCR's consideration of the complaint established that special education students had been categorically excluded from all award and recognition activities.

Under an agreement negotiated with OCR, the district agreed to work with parents in designing a program to recognize the academic accomplishments of special education students.

A school failed to provide a disabled student with behind-the-wheel driver training, as provided to students without disabilities. Through OCR's intervention, the parents were reimbursed for fees and transportation costs for services provided by a private driver training school.

> "You [OCR investigator] made them change their attitude and they can no longer discriminate against a student with a disability who is educated at home. You...created change and for that, I say, 'God Bless You.' "
>
> July 31, 2000, letter from the parent of a student with a disability educated at home

In another complaint, a student was not selected for a work-study position because of being infected with the human immunodeficiency virus. The university also made a prohibited pre-employment inquiry regarding the student's health. The student turned to OCR for help after trying unsuccessfully to use the university's internal grievance process. The university later agreed to give back pay to the student, issue guidelines for selecting work-study students, and provide training on pre-employment inquiries.

Student with Diabetes

A parent of a student with a severe form of diabetes alleged that his son was denied education services and excluded from school for disciplinary reasons due to complications from his disability. The district agreed to develop and implement a medical management program for the student's diabetes, provide compensatory education services for the period of exclusion, and modify disciplinary procedures to ensure the student is not disciplined for issues related to his disability.

Cutbacks in Therapy Services

One of OCR's enforcement offices received 16 separate complaints that a school district cut the number of therapists under contract by 20 percent. The complainants felt that by cutting these therapy services, students with disabilities were adversely affected. Additionally, complainants alleged the district made these changes without holding individualized education program (IEP) meetings. After being contacted by OCR, the school superintendent expressed interest in resolving the complaints. The district agreed to provide compensatory therapy services during the summer break to all students who did not receive services due to the cutbacks. Students unable to receive compensatory

> "[OCR attorney] did an excellent job in her mediation meetings... The Superintendent and myself were truly impressed by her expertise and her knowledge. She established a good rapport with the complainants and with us. I really think that our meetings have brought reconciliation with the district and the family."
>
> May 12, 2000, letter from a school principal

services during the summer will be provided such services during the 2000-01 school year. A parental advocacy group stated the complainants were very satisfied with the way OCR handled the complaints and estimated about 3,000 students will benefit from the resolution.

Employment

A substitute teacher performed his duties without incident. Another teacher noticed the substitute teacher's visual impairment and complained to school officials. After the objection was raised, the substitute teacher was never called back for the remainder of the school term. The district later acknowledged that the visually impaired complainant was qualified to serve as a substitute teacher and gave him back pay.

In another case, two staff members were fired in retaliation for advocating on behalf of students with disabilities. OCR's intervention resulted in the district making settlement payments to the two employees.

ADDRESSING RACE, COLOR, AND NATIONAL ORIGIN DISCRIMINATION

Student Discipline

A school suspended a minority student for fighting but took no action against a white student who also was involved. Through OCR's intervention, the district signed commitments ensuring that disciplinary sanctions would be administered without regard to a student's race. The district also agreed that prior to taking disciplinary action, it will afford a student an opportunity to explain circumstances surrounding the incident. The district later expunged the disciplinary records in the student's file.

English Language Learners

A comprehensive resolution agreement was reached that will provide about 50,000 English language learners the opportunity to participate meaningfully in the education programs of one of the nation's largest school systems. As a result of OCR's cooperation with the district, about 1,700 bilingual and English as a Second Language teachers received training to better identify and instruct students who speak 62 different languages. The training and program services, according to the district's recent assessment, are allowing students who are learning to speak and understand English to outperform other students when they return to the regular education program.

Racial Harassment

A parent alleged that members of a white supremacist group subjected her son and members of her family to racial slurs and death threats. At the end of the school year, a death threat was made against all African American students at her son's school. The mother felt her concerns were not taken seriously by school or law enforcement officials. After OCR's investigation, the district signed a comprehensive plan aimed at preventing and responding to incidents of racial harassment and safety. This included re-evaluating campus security measures and providing programs in race relations for all students and employees. Also, students injured by racial harassment will be offered psychological counseling.

> "I am pleased to inform you that through the positive and collaborative efforts of [OCR investigator], resolution of the case has been made possible. [OCR investigator] established a trusting relationship with the parents and was able to bridge productive communication between the district and the family."
>
> February 11, 2000, letter from a school district's Coordinator of Special Education

Minority Students and Special Education

A state department of education entered into a resolution agreement after OCR completed a compliance review on minority students in programs for the educable mentally handicapped (EMH). The agreement addresses racial disparities in the EMH program. The state will establish a process for all school districts to monitor referral rates based on race for special education evaluation and target technical assistance to school districts that show a significant overrepresentation of minority students in EMH classes. The state will issue a memorandum to school districts recommending that nonverbal supplemental tests be used in assessing the intellectual functioning of students with language deficiencies. The EMH evaluation procedures also will be revised to include parental input in assessing a student's adaptive behavior. These initiatives will have an impact on 28,500 students in the state.

In another compliance review, OCR found that African American students who were referred for problems were more likely to be classified as mentally retarded, while white students were more likely to be classified as learning disabled. OCR also found that African American students spent more time in self-contained classes for the mentally retarded than white students. OCR identified many African American and white students who should not have been placed in special education classes. The district is now addressing these issues in its compliance agreement.

A complaint also was resolved alleging that African American students are inappropriately placed in emotionally handicapped classes and retained when services are no longer required. The district entered into an agreement with OCR to review the screening and evaluation process used in placing students in classes for the emotionally handicapped. The district will collaborate with universities and other urban districts to identify best practices and strategies that can be

used. The agreement affects the 3,682 students currently in the district's emotionally handicapped program.

ADDRESSING SEX DISCRIMINATION

Student Health Insurance

A college's student health insurance plan omitted coverage for pregnancy and based premiums on a student's sex. After a complaint was filed with OCR, the college satisfactorily demonstrated that the plan now provides coverage for pregnancy and requires identical tri-annual premiums for male and female students.

Extracurricular Services

OCR found that a school system was operating mentoring programs only for the benefit of male students. When this was pointed out, school officials agreed to reformulate its "Youth Leadership Program" to include both male and female students in its mentoring programs. Also, all students will be offered equivalent resources and support.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment violates Title IX when it establishes an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment that interferes with the ability to benefit from a school's program. OCR received a complaint alleging that a female high school student was subjected to sexual harassment by other students. A comprehensive settlement was negotiated in which the district agreed to discipline the students engaged in the harassment and to adopt a policy that defines and establishes penalties for sexual harassment. The district also made commitments to investigate incidents of sexual harassment promptly and train staff and students on its newly adopted policy.

Interscholastic Athletics

In a midwestern state, about 3,000 girls are now competing on 156 high school ice hockey teams. The association governing interscholastic athletics scheduled the girls' state tournament in a facility inferior to the facility provided for the boys' ice hockey tournament. After OCR notified the association that a complaint had been filed, the association explored options for providing an equivalent facility for hosting the girls tournament. This included arranging to use what is considered an exceptional competitive arena at a large state university and publicizing the event through television and other media outlets.

Looking Toward the Future

In fiscal year 2000, OCR's work positively changed the lives of more students than ever before. It is critical that we continue to build on this achievement. The complaints OCR receives each day are a stark reminder that discrimination still exists. Barriers to equal educational opportunity remain. Many children still do not enjoy meaningful access to high-quality, high-standards education.

In enforcing the civil rights laws, we must continue to seek both **excellence** and **equity**. Equity and educational excellence are complementary, not competing, goals. Without both, there can be no true equality of educational opportunity.

In meeting the challenge, OCR can rely now on a wide array of strategies that are working. One of the most promising is the building of partnerships with parents, educators and administrators. We are learning that serious change in education cannot be imposed from without but must come from within. It comes when parents and educators in a community come to the table and engage in constructive and thoughtful conversation with each other. And it comes when all parties to an issue work toward a true partnership for change.

We also are witnessing positive change achieved by empowering students and parents to help solve problems of securing equal access to quality education. This involvement helps ensure that positive actions continue even after identified discrimination is remedied and OCR is no longer an active presence in the community.

OCR aims to stay on course in enforcing the important nondiscrimination laws the Congress has enacted over the years. It is a responsibility OCR embraces as the number and diversity of students in U.S. classrooms are greater than at any time in U.S. history. A commitment to the goals of the civil rights compliance program--equal access, educational excellence and high-standards education for **all** students--is an investment that must be made if we are to secure America's future.

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1100

http://www.ed.gov/ocr
Customer Service #: 1-800-421-3481
TTY#: 1-800-260-0471

Eastern Division

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education
J. W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse
Room 701, 01-0061
Boston, MA 02109-4557
Telephone: (617) 223-9662; FAX: (617) 223-9669
TDD: (617) 223-9695; Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
Office for Civil Rights, New York Office
U. S. Department of Education
75 Park Place, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10007-2146
Telephone: (212) 637-6466; FAX: (212) 264-3803
TDD: (212) 637-0478; Email: OCR.NewYork@ed.gov

Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, West Virginia
Office for Civil Rights, Philadelphia Office
U.S. Department of Education
Wanamaker Building, Suite 515
100 Penn Square East
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Telephone: (215) 656-8541; FAX: (215) 656-8605
TDD: (215) 656-8604; Email: OCR.Philadelphia@ed.gov

Southern Division

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee
Office for Civil Rights, Atlanta Office
U.S. Department of Education
61 Forsyth St. S.W., Suite 19T70
Atlanta, GA 30303-3104
Telephone: (404) 562-6350; FAX: (404) 562-6455
TDD: (404) 331-7236; Email: OCR.Atlanta@ed.gov

Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas
Office for Civil Rights, Dallas Office
U.S. Department of Education
1999 Bryan Street, Suite 2600
Dallas, TX 75201
Telephone: (214) 880-2459; FAX: (214) 880-3082
TDD: (214) 880-2456; Email: OCR.Dallas@ed.gov

North Carolina, Virginia, Washington, DC
Office for Civil Rights, District of Columbia Office
U.S. Department of Education
1100 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Rm. 316
P.O. Box 14620
Washington, DC 20044-4620
Telephone: (202) 208-2545; FAX: (202)-208-7797
TDD: (202) 208-7741; Email: OCR.DC@ed.gov

Midwestern Division

Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin
U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
Midwestern Division, Chicago Office
111 North Canal Street, Suite 1053
Chicago, IL 60606-7204
Telephone: (312) 886-8434; FAX: (312) 353-4888
TDD: (312) 353-2540; Email: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov

Michigan, Ohio
U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
Bank One Center, Suite 750
600 Superior Avenue East
Cleveland, OH 44114-2611
Telephone: (216) 522-4970; FAX: (216) 522-2573
TDD: (216) 522-4944; Email: OCR.Cleveland@ed.gov

Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
Office for Civil Rights, Kansas City Office
U.S. Department of Education
10220 North Executive Hills Boulevard; 8th Floor, 07-6010
Kansas City, MO 64153-1367
Telephone: (816) 880-4200; FAX: (816) 891-0644
TDD: (816) 891-0582; Email: OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov

Western Division

Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
Office for Civil Rights, Denver Office
U.S. Department of Education
Federal Building, Suite 310, 08-7010
1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, CO 80204-3582
Telephone: (303) 844-5695; FAX: (303) 844-4303
TDD: (303) 844-3417; Email: OCR.Denver@ed.gov

California
Office for Civil Rights, San Francisco Office
U.S. Department of Education
Old Federal Building, 09-8010
50 United Nations Plaza, Room 239
San Francisco, CA 94102-4102
Telephone: (415) 556-4275; FAX: (415) 437-7783
TDD: (415) 437-7786; Email: OCR.SanFrancisco@ed.gov

Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Pacific Region
Office for Civil Rights, Seattle Office
U.S. Department of Education
915 Second Avenue
Room 3310, 10-9010
Seattle, WA 98174-1099
Telephone: (206) 220-7900; FAX: (206) 220-7887
TDD: (206) 220-7907; Email:OCR.Seattle@ed.gov